



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New Orleans District

Project Fact Sheet

Project

New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Protection

Purpose

Upon completion, this project will achieve storm risk reduction for Plaquemines Parish at the maximum level authorized by Congress.

Location

The project straddles the Mississippi River in Plaquemines Parish. On the east bank, the project extends 16 miles on the back levee from Phoenix (located 28 miles southeast of New Orleans) down to Bohemia, Louisiana. On the west bank it extends 34 miles from St. Jude (located 39 miles southeast of New Orleans) to Venice, Louisiana, on the back levee and on the mainline levee. (Mainline levees typically run parallel to the channel, and back levees, or “setback” levees, usually serve as a backup to an existing levee that has become endangered due to such actions as river migration or erosion.)

Benefit to the Community

Initial levee construction raised elevation enough to make some Plaquemines Parish property owners eligible for coverage by the National Flood Insurance Program.

To compensate for project-associated wetland losses, the Corps created a marsh in the Pass à l'Ouvre State Waterfowl Management Area and constructed five crevasses in the Mississippi River Delta to promote further marsh creation.

In 1987, the Corps redesigned the City Price to Tropical Bend segment of the levee to incorporate the use of geotextile fabric, which improves soil strength in levee construction. The redesign reduced right-of-way and construction costs resulting in savings of \$35 million to \$40 million.

Features

Hurricane protection in Plaquemines Parish consists of both federal and non-federal levees. Key features of the federal levee system are described below.

West bank:

- Thirty-four miles of enlarged west bank Mississippi River levees from City Price to Venice
- Three miles of enlarged back levees from St. Jude to City Price
- Thirteen miles of enlarged back levees from City Price to Tropical Bend and two 54-inch flap-gated culverts

- Twelve miles of enlarged back levees from Tropical Bend to Fort Jackson and a floodgate at Empire
- Nine miles of enlarged back levees from Fort Jackson to Venice

East bank:

- Sixteen miles of enlarged back levees from Phoenix to Bohemia and 10 flap-gated culverts

Sponsors

Historically, the Plaquemines Parish Government has been responsible for all non-federal levees and served as the Corps' local sponsor for federal levees. Recent state legislation made the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana (LACPRA) the local sponsor for federal projects in Plaquemines Parish. The LACPRA is the newly-formed state entity responsible for prioritizing and coordinating the state's coastal restoration and hurricane protection efforts.

Status

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Plaquemines Parish at Buras, a town located about 55 miles southeast of New Orleans. At the time, the structures that make up the New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Protection Project were about 85% complete. Since then, the Corps has repaired the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and restored hurricane protection to its pre-Katrina levels. Additionally, the Corps has received authorization and funding from Congress to accelerate completion of the project and to restore the existing system to design height. The Corps is on schedule to have these Plaquemines Parish levees constructed to their authorized grade by 2011.

Post-Katrina legislation also requires that the Corps adopt a portion of the non-federal levee along the west bank in Plaquemines Parish for incorporation into the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). A supplemental environmental impact statement regarding the potential alignment of non-federal levees within the HSDRRS is scheduled to be released for public comment in September 2008.

Authority

This project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1962 (PL 87-874) as the Mississippi River Delta at and below New Orleans, Louisiana. The project subsequently became known as the New Orleans to Venice Hurricane Protection Project.